

By Eric Young

<http://www.christianpost.com/article/20091116/obama-arrives-in-china-for-1st-visit/>

The president's visit is being closely watched by religious freedom advocates who have been urging Obama to raise rights and freedom issues in a country where repression of peaceful religious activity remains intense and widespread.

"During your visit, we urge you to raise critical issues of religious freedom and the rule of law with Chinese officials, seek meetings with prominent human rights defenders and repressed religious leaders, and make a strong public statement about the importance of human rights to the future of U.S.-China relations," wrote Leonard Leo, **chair of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom**, in a letter sent to the president prior to his trip.

"The trip is an opportunity to dispel any notion that human rights and religious freedoms are not priorities, and to set the record straight on any of the Administration's prior statements on the place of human rights in our bilateral relationship with China," Leo added on behalf of the bipartisan federal body.